

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 081545

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 81545 ACTION BONN LONDON INFO MBFR
VIENNA USCINCEUR USNMR SHAPE DATED 10 APR 75
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S E C R E T STATE 081545

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: BRITISH AND GERMAN THOUGHTS ON OPTION III

REF: A. LONDON 4802 B. BONN 5313 C. MBFR VIENNA 143

1. WE APPRECIATE CONTINUING THOUGHT WHICH TICKELL AND RUTH
ARE GIVING OPTION III ISSUES. WE ARE TAKING FRG AND UK
VIEWS AS EXPRESSED IN THE TRILATERALS INTO ACCOUNT IN OUR
FURTHER PREPARATIONS HERE. ALL ELEMENTS OF RUTH AND TICKELL
SUGGESTIONS WERE RAISED AT TRILATERALS, AND US VIEWS WERE
EXPRESSED THEN. THE REVISED "US VIEWS" PAPER WILL COVER
POINTS RAISED BY RUTH AND TICKELL IN REFTELS A AND B.

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SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 081545

EMBASSIES BONN AND LONDON MAY, HOWEVER, DRAW ON POINTS

BELOW, AS APPROPRIATE, TO RESPOND TO SUGGESTIONS THAT TANK COMPONENT BE DELETED OR MADE MORE AMBIGUOUS AS AN ALLIED PHASE I OBJECTIVE.

2. RECENT US REVIEW OF MBFR CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE ALLIED OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING THE DISPARITY IN GROUND FORCES AND ACHIEVING A MILITARILY SIGNIFICANT OUTCOME FOR MBFR. IN OUR VIEW, BOTH OF THESE OBJECTIVES WOULD BE MATERIALLY ADVANCED BY THE REDUCTION OF SOVIET TANKS. THE ALLIED PROPOSAL FOR A REDUCTION OF 1700 TANKS IS ALREADY ON THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. OPTION III WAS DESIGNED AS AN ENRICHMENT OF THE CURRENT ALLIED

NEGOTIATING POSITION TO ACHIEVE ALLIED PHASE I REDUCTION GOALS -- THE TANK ARMY AND THE COMMON CEILING. FOCUSING ONLY ON SOVIET FORCE UNITS OR MANPOWER (AND THEREBY IN EFFECT DROPPING AN EXPLICIT ALLIED DEMAND FOR TANKS) IS A SIGNIFICANT CONCESSION WHICH WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE. MUCH OF THE MILITARY, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED PHASE I REDUCTIONS COMES FROM WITHDRAWAL OF THE TANKS. TO RELINQUISH THIS OBJECTIVE WOULD DECREASE THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL BENEFITS OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT.

3. FURTHERMORE, THE EMERGING EASTERN INTEREST IN REDUCING THREATENING ELEMENTS (E.G., MBFR VIENNA 128) SUGGESTS A TACTICAL IMPORTANCE IN MAINTAINING THE TANK COMPONENT.

4. ASKING FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TANK UNITS RATHER THAN SPECIFYING THE REDUCTION OF TANKS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY PREVENT THE SOVIETS FROM DEMANDING CONSTRAINTS ON ALLIED TANKS. IN FACT, THEY MAY BE ESPECIALLY LIKELY TO DO SO IF WE ASKED FOR SPECIFIC CONSTRAINTS ON SOVIET NUCLEAR SYSTEMS, AS TICKELL SUGGESTS. EMPHASIS ON UNITS COULD ALSO INVITE BROADER DEMANDS FOR EQUIPMENT CONSTRAINTS, E.G., THE WITHDRAWAL OF SPECIFIED US TANK UNITS WITH ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT.

5. THE PROPOSAL TO DEFINE SOVIET REDUCTIONS SOLELY IN TERMS OF MANPOWER FROM SPECIFIED UNITS (WITH ONLY PRESUMED TANK REDUCTIONS) COULD PUT THE ALLIES IN AN AWKWARD
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PAGE 03 STATE 081545

NEGOTIATING POSITION. WE WOULD BE ARGUING THAT ONLY THE WEST HAD TO REDUCE ARMAMENTS (OPTION III ELEMENTS) -- AN ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTION WE DO NOT INTEND. BEYOND THAT, AS NOTED IN PARA. 7, REFTTEL C, THE TICKELL APPROACH COULD BE TACTICALLY DISADVANTAGEOUS IN THAT IT COULD OPEN THE WAY FOR AN EASTERN COUNTERPROPOSAL TO LIMIT A FIRST REDUCTION AGREEMENT TO MANPOWER ONLY, WITH SMALL REDUCTIONS ON AN EQUAL PERCENTAGE OR EQUAL NUMBER BASIS.

6. THE RESULTS OF FURTHER US THINKING ON CEILINGS ISSUES
WILL BE CONTAINED IN THE FINAL VERSION OF THE "US VIEWS"
LAPER, AS DISCUSSED IN THE TRILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. KISSINGER
UNQUOTE
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